What is one word that describes the way you feel going into an interview...

Don’t Panic!
Learning Objectives

By the end of this workshop, you will be able to:

• Make a strong introduction
• Discern what a hiring manager is looking for
• Prepare your own interview questions
• Identify and practice examples (C A R stories) to highlight your strengths
• Practice techniques to increase your comfort and confidence in an interview
The first steps

Just like when you tailor your PHP and cover letter, the first steps are to:

• Do your research (Organization, Department/Unit, reports, etc.)
• Analyze the Job Opening/vacancy announcement
  - Understand the position
  - What is the hiring manager looking for?
Technical assessment

- Should test substantive knowledge and skills relevant to the position
- Technical assessment addresses substantive knowledge, interview should focus on competencies and behaviours
- Prepare (and take) your own written assessment
What is a Competency-based Interview?

- Mandatory element of every UN selection
- Past behaviour and experience is the best indicator of future performance
- Situational examples illustrate individual competencies
- Used to evaluate a candidate's behavioural and cultural fit within the organisation

In other words, your history tells a story about you and demonstrate how you handle a variety of situations
The Power of the First Impression

- Interview starts before you enter the room
- Project confidence, not arrogance
- Dress professionally, comfortably and conservatively
- Establish eye contact and develop rapport
- Be aware of body language
- Strive to overcome nerves
“Elevator speech”

- What is it?
- How do I formulate one?

Be authentic. Personalize it.

- Write it down
- Practice it, out loud
- Memorize it
- Get feedback
- Develop a few variations
Elevator speech (sample)

“My passion, and one of my greatest strengths lies in helping colleagues develop themselves to reach their full potential in support of Organizational mandates, through professional development, career support, performance management, coaching and other learning solutions…”

“I currently provide these services for all staff at UNOV and UNODC in Vienna, and for 1500 staff and personnel in 65 global Field Offices. As an experienced learning solutions designer, facilitator, trainer and certified coach with more than 20 years in recruitment and training, gained in 5 countries in both public and private sector Organizations, I am ready to face a new challenge, and would like to bring my passion, dedication and creative problem-solving skills to the position of X in Organization Y…”
The role of the United Nations interview panel

- Trained in CBI to ensure consistency
- Apply best practices
- Strive for fairness and objectivity
- Trying to gather evidence against indicators for each competency
- Broad questions determined in advance
In the UN Secretariat, all Competency-Based interviews will ask questions on the **Professionalism** and at least 2 Core Competencies.
Professionalism

Positive Indicators
- Shows pride in work and in achievements.
- Demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter.
- Is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results.
- Is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns.
- Shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges.
- Remains calm in stressful situations.

Negative Indicators
- Is less motivated than others to achieve.
- Appears less knowledgeable to others about subject matter or field.
- Is complacent about achievements.
- Sets easy targets and personal objectives.
- Allows pressure to get to him/her.
- Tends to find it hard to bounce back after setbacks and difficult challenges.
Professionalism: sample questions

- What was a recent success that you were particularly proud of?
- What was your role related to the successful outcome?
- What did you do that was so effective and how can you replicate that?

- Describe a time when you did not meet your usual standards of work.
- What were the consequences?
- What could you have done differently?
Planning and Organizing

Positive Indicators
- Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies.
- Identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required.
- Allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work.
- Foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning.
- Monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary.
- Uses time efficiently.

Negative Indicators
- Has no clear system of priorities.
- Appears disorganized and unsystematic.
- Organizes impractical work schedules.
- Is unrealistic about timescales.
- Efforts get sidetracked.
- Deadlines not met.
- Tasks not completed.
- No checks on activities.
- Is unwilling to change plans to meet new demands.
Planning and Organizing: sample questions

• Give me an example of a time when you had conflicting priorities with tight deadlines.
• How did you prioritize?
• What was the outcome?

• Describe the last time you missed a deadline.
• Why did this happen?
• What was the outcome?
• What did you learn from this experience?
Teamwork

**Positive Indicators**
- Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organisational goals.
- Solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others.
- Places team agenda before personal agenda.
- Builds consensus for task purpose and direction with team members.
- Supports and acts in accordance with final group decisions, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position.
- Shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.

**Negative Indicators**
- Rarely offers support to colleagues.
- Prefers to work alone.
- Emphasizes achieving personal goals.
- Shows limited consideration of the ideas and input of others.
- Prefers to act alone.
- Is prepared to ignore/disrupt majority decisions.
- Takes the credit for team accomplishments; passes on responsibility for team limitations.
Teamwork: sample questions

- Describe a time when you worked in a really effective team.
- What made the team so effective?
- What was your particular contribution to the team?

- Tell me about an occasion when you had difficulties working with a team.
- What caused the problems?
- How did you respond?
Managerial Competencies

Vision
Leadership
Empowering Others
Managing Performance
Building Trust
Judgement/Decision Making
Preparation for a Competency-based Interview

Prepare a wide range of brief stories about:
- your accomplishments
- strengths and weaknesses
- successes and failures
- challenges and problems
What is the first thing that comes to your mind when I ask you…

What achievements are you most proud of?
Name some of your biggest professional successes…
What are your greatest accomplishments?
“CAR” Stories

C - Challenge (context)

- Use real world examples to demonstrate skills, attributes and behaviours
- It is helpful to prepare brief stories about your accomplishments, and how you got there

A - Action

- Cite examples from current employment, past employment and other life experiences

R - Results

- Know the skill or competency that each story illustrates
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>I was asked to look at the Unit’s filing system which was disorganized and hard to use.</td>
<td>I analysed the existing system and, utilizing technology, reorganized it so that the information was more logically arranged, easier to find, and, reduced paper waste.</td>
<td>The new electronic filing system I developed resulted in making the team’s work easier, saved everyone time and enabled us to serve our clients more effectively. Recognizing how effective and more streamlined the new process that I developed was, I was asked to train other Team Assistants on the programme, and 4 other Units are now using this filing system.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Tips on writing your own CAR stories

• Use examples from past or current position, with most on more recent experiences
• Concentrate on the competencies for the target position;
• Quantify (when possible)
• Be diplomatic – do not disparage anyone
• If you use opinions, try to express someone else’s opinion rather than your own
• If you have limited work experience, use other relevant life experiences
3 concerns of a hiring manager

There are 3 main things hiring managers ask themselves about candidates:

• Do they have an understanding of, and interest in, the job?

• Do they have the knowledge and ability to be able to perform successfully?

• Would they be a good “fit” for the team and Organization?
Effective interviewing begins with active listening.

- Be sensitive to the verbal and nonverbal communication of your interviewer(s)
- You can summarize and ask if your understanding is correct
- This will often stimulate your interviewer to be more clear and more forthcoming
- Your accuracy and responsiveness as a listener also demonstrates strong communication skills
Nonverbal communication

*Body language can be interpreted both positively and negatively*

- Tense or nervous behaviour is distracting
- Your *facial expressions* should put an interviewer at ease - SMILE!
- Good *eye contact* establishes rapport and shows you are attentive and interested
The Interview

- Establish rapport with the interviewers
- Listen carefully to the questions
- Choose the most relevant example (CAR story)
- Be concise, structured and clear
- Respond with interest and enthusiasm
- Convey your understanding of the requirements of the position and demonstrate how you are a good fit
- Focus on your role in the example (“we” vs. “I”)
Pre-interview checklist

Before the interview:

• Confirm time, location and name of individual(s) you will be meeting with and the anticipated duration
• Think about the image you want to convey – be sure to dress in professional attire
• Prepare answers to areas of weakness
• Practice!

Think only positive thoughts about yourself!
Do you have any questions for us?
Possible questions for you to ask

• What are some of the challenges facing this position?
• What do you feel are the current priorities for the position?
• What aspects of this position, do you feel need immediate attention?

Or..., thank you and say a portion of your elevator speech (your final sales pitch)…
Tips for phone, Skype, and video interviews

• Get the names of your interviewers, spelled correctly, prior to the session.
• Write notes prior to the interview – you can refer to them while talking.
• Use tone, pitch and silence effectively.
• Consider standing during the interview – it helps to put energy into your voice.
• Be sure you schedule for a quiet place where you will not be interrupted.
• Practice, in front of a mirror, webcam, etc.
Summary of steps to prepare for a Competency-based interview

Key Concepts

1. Do a critical analysis of the Job Opening
2. Develop your own written assessment & interview questions
3. Develop your CAR stories
4. Practice, practice, PRACTICE!
5. Put your best foot forward during the interview
6. Study the JO (and read between the lines) to understand what the hiring manager is looking for
7. Set it aside for a few days, then take your own written test. Pool other resources to come up with test and interview questions.
8. Matched to the competencies of the JO, develop several CAR stories that highlight your experience for each competency – review the indicators to ensure they are appropriate examples

- You are prepared; be confident. Listen carefully to the questions. Be specific and concise in your answers.
- Get comfortable with your “elevator speech” and your CAR stories. Do mock interviews. Practice in the mirror, etc.
Success occurs when opportunity meets preparation.

-Zig Ziglar
Additional resources

- The Unofficial Guide to Acing the Interview by Michelle Tullier (1999)
- Behavior Based Interviewing: Selecting the Right Person for the Job by Terry Fitzwater (2000)
- Competency-Based Interviews: Master the Tough New Interview Style and Give Them the Answers That Will Win You the Job by Robin Kessler (2006)
- Winning Job Interviews by Dr. Paul Powers (2005)
- The 250 Job Interview Questions by Peter Veruki

Link to the Competency Development Guide:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3-WKWpNl3I

Ted Talk (Amy Cuddy), Your Body Shapes Who You Are
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc